

JPMORGAN CHASE SETS THE STAGE FOR YOUNG PERFORMERS: JIMMY SMITS AND KRISTEN JOHNSTON AMONG ACTORS PROVIDING LOCAL YOUTH WITH A GLIMPSE INTO THE THEATER INDUSTRY

NEW YORK, July 22, 2004 – Aspiring young actors, as well as youths desiring more exposure to Shakespearean drama, will get a lesson on the business of theater from industry leaders at the JPMorgan Chase Leadership Day for Young Performers, to be held next week at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park. On Thursday, July 29, from 10 a.m. to noon, talented youth groups will get a sneak peak at the excitement surrounding Shakespeare in the Park, when actors perform key scenes from this year's production, *Much Ado About Nothing*, followed by an interactive panel discussion and "behind the scenes" look at the production.

The second annual JPMorgan Chase Leadership Day for Young Performers will give an expected 1,500 middle- and high-schoolers from New York area theater programs an opportunity to listen, learn and communicate with experts in the world of theater. Attendees represent groups and schools ranging from the New York City Mission Society, to the Edwin Gould Academy of Chestnut Ridge, NY, to Alianza Dominicana, a non-profit community development organization in Washington Heights with the mission to assist families in breaking the cycle of poverty.

In addition to viewing scenes from *Much Ado About Nothing*, attendees will be given an insider's look at the theater industry through an interactive panel discussion with experts and artists. The panel of professionals will feature those who work behind the scenes in theater, including a costume director, lighting director, composer performers and their director.

"Mentoring and leadership are embedded in JPMorgan Chase's culture and we continually look for ways to reach out to youth in the community and nurture self-confidence and determination," said Lewis Jones, President of The J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation. "The Leadership Program provides a practical way to introduce the boys and girls to the many facets of a career in theater, aside from being a performer."

Shakespeare in Central Park is part of the JPMorgan Chase 2004 Summer Arts Series, which features a variety of more than 200 concerts, performances and other activities – all free and open to the public – in 25 communities throughout the tri-state area from mid-June to early September. The JPMorgan Chase Summer Arts Series is seven years in existence and has been growing in popularity each summer. This series makes it possible for local residents and their families to experience innovative music, culture and amusement. A complete listing is available at www.jpmorganchase.com/summerarts.

JPMorgan Chase is a leading sponsor of Shakespeare in the Park.

Now in its third year, JPMorgan Chase originated "Leadership Day" programs to incorporate into its major sponsorships an educational experience for youngsters in the community. In addition to its sponsorship of Shakespeare in the Park, JPMorgan Chase has presented separate "Leadership Days" at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, NY, and the JPMorgan Chase Open in Carson, CA. For the tennis events, youths are provided with a "behind the scenes" look at tennis, as well as interaction with tennis greats like Tracy Austin, Mary Jo Fernandez, Zina Garrison and Gigi Fernandez. For its 2003 sponsorship of a Manet exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago, students from a local art school enjoyed a special viewing of the exhibit and then met with art professionals and Chicago Bears Lineman Mike Gandy, an art enthusiast.

Shakespeare's historic play, *Much Ado About Nothing*, demonstrates the quintessential "battle of the sexes" with deceit, manipulation, passion, and ultimately—love. Set in the Italian city of Messina, Sicily, two pairs of lovers vacillate between love and hate. Although the play is classified as a comedy, it often seems only steps away from becoming a tragedy as the characters create a strong sense of anger, betrayal, grief and despair.

The cast of *Much Ado About Nothing* features: Jimmy Smits, Kristen Johnston, Sam Waterson, Elisabeth Waterson, Brian Murray, Dominic Chianese and Sean Patrick Thomas. Other cast members include: Laura Kai Chen, Manoel Felciano, Frank Faucett, Bill Heck, Andre Holland, Jayne Houdyshell, Peter Francis James, Kevin Kelly, Dane Knell, Peter McCain, Julio Monge, Lorenzo Pisoni, Steven Skybell, Emily Swallow, and Christopher Evan Welch.

Performances are Tuesday through Sunday at 8 p.m. through August 8th. Tickets to *Much Ado About Nothing* are FREE and will be available on the day of the performance (two per person, please) at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park beginning at 1:00 p.m. and at The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street (near Astor Place), from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The closest entrances to The Delacorte are at 81st Street and Central Park West or 79th Street and Fifth Avenue.